

The Advantages of Our Studies.

"Well what do you learn at college, anyway?" is the query often put to the college student by his friends at home. He attempts to explain, but is soon convinced of his inability to express definitely and completely the training that his college provides. He can name every study in the course. This, indeed, throws much light on the subject; but not enough. For it gives but a slight hint of the real practical good of the college in furnishing to the student experience, information and discipline.

In considering the course of instruction at our college, we must bear in mind the object aimed at. Our institution is not a university, a classical college, a normal school, a technical institute, or an academy, but is as its name indicates an agricultural college. It is one of the many agricultural colleges of our country created by an act of Congress in 1862. This act provided for the support of at least one college in each state where the leading

object should be, "without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." So it is to be seen that ours is a peculiar, or particular, kind of college known in our country during only the last few decades.

Connected with our college is an experiment station. Though most of its work is to help others by giving them in bulletins the results of experiments, yet the students come in for a share of the benefits. Some of them are employed in the work of the station and so become acquainted with experimental work. The station is before all for inspection so that students can see the manner of carrying it on even if they do not watch the results. Many of the truths learned are given to the students in the talks, or lectures, of the professors in their classes. Even if the experiment station does add but little to the student's education, that little is entirely of the practical kind needed in agricultural pursuits.

The industrial work of our

college is a modern improvement. The forty-five minutes spent each day by the boy on the farm, in the carpenter shop, iron works, or printing office or by the girl in the kitchen, sewing room, green house, music room, or printing office is well spent. This industrial work is one of the important branches in an agricultural college. It trains the hands as the studies do the mind. The instruction given in the industrials and the experience gained by continual practice is sufficient at least to be useful to the student in his after years, whether he does or does not take up any of the trades as an occupation. This training - useful in the many small things of every day life - is just what is needed by young people of industrial inclinations.

The studies to be taught are according to the Congressional Act to be, "without excluding other scientific and classical studies, related to agriculture and the mechanic arts." The object is declared to be, "to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes

in the several pursuits and professions of life." Besides the special industrial branches are other studies to finish the education obtained in the common schools. Is not this in accordance with the Congressional Act and in accordance with the needs of the industrial people of our country? To take up each study and see that it is proper and practical in the course and in what ways space forbids. But by examining the course of study a general idea may be gleaned of the knowledge gained. By grouping the studies a better insight is probably given of the useful information that they give.

In two terms of agriculture the principal topics are the history of the art, the different breeds of cattle and the principles of stock raising, and the management of crops. A knowledge of chemistry - elementary, organic, and analytical - is necessary in dealing with the questions of the soil, manures, and common plants. Besides the above no farmer, mechanic, or what not can get along well in these days without mathematical training. And drawing

is a further help in understanding mathematics and mechanics and related arts. A study of the English language and of history and civil government is now advantageous to any and all classes of people. Physics opens to the learner a vast field of thought and assists in the solution of everyday mysteries. Biology, treating of life and its conditions in plants, animals, and man is both interesting and instructive. Geology, or the science of the conditions of the earth in the past, should go side by side with the study of its present conditions. Psychology, logic, and political economy develop the mind and train it to precise methods of thinking.

Another phase of the college training is the rhetorical work. Nearly every boy or girl speaks his or her first declamation at college with feelings of extreme terror. But before his college course is over, he has learned to overcome not only his fear but also the awkwardness of his first attempt. The training to gain ability to express thought in the most forcible manner is of no small value. The ready

and able speaker is what the world now demands.

War was raging within our land when Congress enacted the agricultural college bill. And our nation's legislators, profiting by the disastrous experience of the sudden opening of the civil war with scarcely a regiment of men who understood even the simplest evolutions of military tactics, incorporated as a part of the training at the agricultural colleges some instruction and practice in military duties. Now every year in our college over one-hundred students practice the regular drill maneuvers and the officers study the United States infantry and artillery tactics. Besides being a physical training for the cadets it prepares them to serve their country more effectively if needed in an hour of danger.

The regular studies as outlined in the course are the only ones pursued by the great number of students. But if any one wishes to become more proficient in a peculiar branch he may take a special or after he has graduated a post graduate. Each succeeding year an ever in -

creasing number avail themselves of this opportunity to become advanced in a special line of study.

Every college has its student organizations. Ours has its literary, scientific, and religious societies. Only the members fully realize how much benefit they are to the student. In connection with class rhetorical work they make him a better speaker and better able to command the forces of his intellect. They teach him parliamentary usages and familiarize him with the elements of the living societies of the world.

Very often the value of the time spent at college is not appreciated because the idea of the gradual growth of mind during all the months of college work is not taken into consideration.

The information gained at college simply for the sake of information would often not be of any very great practical use. But we must not forget another factor in valuing the inventory of a college course. That is the development of the mind. Whoever spends four years in study

cannot fail to develop his mind into wider channels of thought - to be able to think clearer. This quickening of the mind is a very important part of a college education.

We might then sum up the result of the course here in three things: - first, the experience gained in industrial work, in class experiment work, and in college and student society work; second, the information brought out in the various studies and industrials; four years study such as we have ought to find every student the possessor of much valuable knowledge for future use; third, the development of the mind to greater activity. Ours is a peculiar college and it has peculiar advantages to make it so. If education is a success in any line, it is certainly true of industrial education. The increased demand for the educational facilities of our college makes it assured that what it teaches the student is well worth the four years time and few hundred dollars expense that it takes to complete the course.

John Frost